

Small Colorado Company, PACT Outdoors, Tackles Big Stewardship Problems with the Clean Fourteen Initiative

PACT Outdoors, makers of innovative all-in-one bathroom kits for outdoor adventures, launched a research project and pilot program called Clean Fourteen.

CRESTED BUTTE , CO, UNITED STATES, October 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last July, [PACT Outdoors](#), makers of innovative [all-in-one bathroom kits](#) for outdoor adventures, launched a research project and pilot program called Clean Fourteen, an effort to study poop on Colorado's 14,000 foot peaks. PACT partnered with The Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, Leave No Trace, and researchers from Penn State University to study current attitudes and behaviors around

packing out poop; factors that persuade hikers to pack out; and to test a first-of-its-kind pack out kit kiosk and disposal station. The goal is to help land managers and trail organizations design and implement better, more cost-effective systems for waste management in the backcountry.

Hikers are strongly encouraged to pack out their waste above treeline on 14ers due to the extremely high usage and fragile alpine ecosystems. However, the lack of familiarity with this practice makes human waste an issue on many 14ers across the state.

To study hiker behavior, a kiosk was installed at the North Mount Elbert trailhead with free [Pack Out Kits](#) and a trash bin to dispose of the bags. A researcher from PSU was stationed at the trailhead surveying users as they completed their hike.

Mount Elbert receives about 15,000 hikers per year. The study showed that 11% of hikers were pooping on Mt. Elbert. Given the annual visitation estimates, this equates to approximately 1,650 people pooping per year. 30% of those hikers pooped at the trailhead using the vault toilet, while 70% pooped on the mountain during their hike without bathroom facilities. Managing vault toilets is very costly, making up a significant portion of land management budgets. The research



PACT Founders and Penn State Researchers at Mount Elbert Trailhead Kiosk



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*Jake Thomas, PACT Outdoors
Co-Founder*

suggests that while essential, vault toilets don’t address the needs of the vast majority of hikers on 14ers, indicating that given issues with mis-handled waste, other strategies may be needed.

The research also showed that people are not prepared with their own pack out kits, but that they are open to using them. 30% of hikers packed out their poop with almost all of them using the provided pack out kits. 79% said trying a pack out kit makes them more likely to bring one in the future.

Penn State researcher Shari Edelson reflected, “With so many people pooping on the trail rather than in facilities located at trailheads, we can minimize our environmental impacts by making plans to dispose of our waste properly. The study showed that people are willing to do this but aren’t fully prepared with the supplies they need. Educating hikers and introducing them to the tools that help get the job done are two keys to helping them take action.”

“We need approaches to stewardship problems in the outdoors that treat users as an integral part of the solution rather than passive recipients of information. Our goal now is to publish the research and find partners to support us in expanding the program and study its impact at scale,” said Jake Thomas, PACT Outdoors Co-Founder.

About PACT:

PACT Outdoors is the creator of award-winning all-in-one bathroom kits for outdoor adventures. Designed in the mountains and tested in all environments, their kits reinvent the backcountry bathroom experience. PACT Outdoors is headquartered in Crested Butte, Colorado. For more information, visit: pactoutdoors.com.

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